Article III. Relations between Spouses; Their Various Rights and Duties

573x 133 Spouses are obliged to fulfill the duties and perform the tasks incumbent upon them.

It is difficult to say just how far the sense of duty to fulfill the debitum conjugale extends among the Nkundó. Normally, they very frequently fulfill this obligation toward each other. But after a good quarrel they abstain, either through mutual consent or because one of them refuses. If one of the parties fails seriously and repeatedly [536] in this respect, the question is resolved by a divorce. The response to temporary lapses is limited to reprimands, disputes, blows, and other common reactions. It should be added that continence is required [134] during the ekelé period after the birth of a child and after setting up a new hunting enclosure (lokombo) or a new fishing weir (bosaka), before the third piece of a game or fish is caught.

1. Meals

573λ 264 A couple never take their meals together. The husband eats the food prepared for him and served to him by his wife alone, with his grown sons, or with friends or relatives. The wife herself eats with her small children, her daughters, or her female relatives. The two sexes never mingle at meals.

573λ 521 The same rule applies to talks, but it is much less strictly maintained; it is not rare to find that, for one reason or another, women participate in the conversation of men.

It will not be long before, through the influence of Christianity, [266] women will generally be admitted in the conversations of the opposite sex. Developments with respect to mixed meals will come with much more difficulty; in practice the question has not even been broached.

573x 36 [304] Thus one finds a kitchen next to the bedroom or separated from the hut; in addition to being the place where food is prepared, it is where the woman spends her day. The kitchen is sometimes a structure separated from the dwelling itself, sometimes a part of the house separated from the bedroom by a partition containing a door.